

**Daniel Ogden. *The Werewolf in the Ancient World*.** Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. 288 Pages. \$32.95 hardcover. ISBN: 9780198854319.

Daniel Ogden's latest book, *The Werewolf in the Ancient World*, explores the folkloric nature of werewolf stories within Classical and later Latin and Nordic sources. Ogden considers the conceptualization of werewolves and their transformations in the literature, as well as their relation to witches, ghosts, and accounts of heroes and gods. A primary aim of *The Werewolf in the Ancient World* is to broaden the amount of sources present in the academic discourse on werewolves beyond merely Petronius' account. Accordingly, Ogden notes that a secondary purpose of his work is to serve as a sourcebook on werewolf texts. Here, he succeeds, sometimes to the detriment of the flow of his argument, which is frequently divided up by lengthy excerpts of text. The scope of this research covers expansive temporal and geographic territory, spanning from the classical period into the thirteenth century CE and from the Mediterranean into the Norse regions. The broad breadth of the book provides Ogden with a plethora of sources to consider, creating a thoroughly researched discussion and a meticulous sourcebook.

Ogden begins his first chapter, following an instructive introduction which outlines integral definitions, by examining the connection between witches, sorcerers, and werewolves in folklore. His discussion centers a few notable witches and sorcerers from Classical literature—Homer's Circe, Herodotus' Neuri, Vergil's Moeris—as well as the general concept of a *strix-witch* to demonstrate that magic is closely related to shape-shifting. The ancient literature contains ample examples of a practitioner employing magic to transform themselves or another being. Throughout this chapter, Ogden asserts the connection between these witches, sorcerers, and werewolves within the imagination of not only Classical literature, but also extending throughout the Medieval texts.

A similar connection between werewolves and ghosts is the focal point of the second chapter. Ogden begins by examining the relationship between wolves and death more broadly, evidenced through the Etruscan iteration of Hades, Aita/Calu. Then, he elucidates the connection between werewolves and ghosts through a discussion of physical transformation as a form of soul manipulation, integrating some of the sorcerers studied in the first chapter. Notable analysis of Pausanias' Hero of Timesa and Philostratus' Dog-demon of Ephesus again exemplifies the ambiguities of the terms related to ghosts and apparitions, which supports Ogden's argument that the sorts of *phasma* present in these tales is further connection between werewolves (both as lycanthropy and cynanthropy) and ghosts.

The third chapter contains an analysis of the nature of the werewolf as presented in folklore and its perception within the texts. Ogden first questions whether a werewolf is inherently human or inherently wolf, and demonstrates a varied opinion amongst the ancient sources. The motif of an identifying wound, often sustained in wolf form and recognized while in human form, linking the two forms, is prevalent

throughout the literature. The ingestion of food becomes important to this examination, as many werewolf accounts portray the person only shifting after ingestion, or some variation thereof. Moreover, werewolves frequently run off into the forest after their transition into wolf form, which Ogden interprets as shunning human society and evidence of an inner wolf.

In the fourth chapter, Ogden considers the role of soul projection within werewolf lore, and in doing so revisits concepts analyzed in the first two chapters. Breaking from the chronological pattern of his previous chapters, Ogden begins his analysis with the later Medieval and Early Modern sources, and revisits the Classical texts at the end of the chapter. Through this format, Ogden distinguishes key themes and elements more evident in the later sources, then illustrates the same or similar themes in the earlier texts. These themes include the concepts of abandoned clothes as a human shell, projected wolf form, faithless wife, just werewolf, wronged werewolf fleeing, and connection between inn-keepers and werewolves.

In the fifth chapter, Ogden further examines transformations among ghosts and analyzes the story of Polites, a hero-turned-ghost-demon known for wearing wolf skin. Ogden provides a close reading of the varying accounts of Polites and devotes significant attention to the account of Pausanias. Pausanias' work remains a primary source for the remainder of the chapter. The account of Euthymus, in conjunction with the myth of Eurybatus, provides two mythic examples of heroes whose enemies transform after their death.

The sixth and final chapter addresses perhaps the most popular werewolf from antiquity—Lykaon. The various versions of Lykaon's aetiological myth receives ample attention, and Ogden, fulfilling his secondary intention of creating a sourcebook, includes the relevant excerpts from the differing accounts. Ogden differentiates between the primary Lykaia myth, in which Lykaon or his sons serve Zeus human flesh and are subsequently transformed into a wolf, and the alternate werewolf lore contained in the account of Demaenetus/Damarchus. These myths function as explanations for the rites at Lykaia, which perhaps may have been a maturation rite, although Ogden is careful to explicate the issues with this possibility. Moreover, Ogden emphasizes that the account of Damarchus is the exception to the standard rituals at Lykaia, informing the interpretation of his multifaceted myths.

*The Werewolf in the Ancient World* is a rich scholarly resource. In addition to its role as a sourcebook, each chapter includes lengthy and informative footnotes, which contextualize the discourse and the sources. The work also contains comprehensible tables which clearly map specific themes and motifs within the folklore, providing a concise visual representation of Ogden's argument at various points throughout the book. Three appendices address supplemental concepts, including Circe's characterization as a witch, 'almost' werewolf accounts, and cynocephali. Despite the plethora of well-researched information, the work is never over-complicated by

scholarly diction. Ogden's writing style is lively and engaging, creating an overall enjoyable and accessible read for scholars, students, and casual readers.

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